

Written Testimony of
Connecticut ENT Society
Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
On February 28, 2012

FTK

In Opposition to

SB. No. 202 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR HEARING AIDS

The Connecticut ENT Society, the state organization representing over 90% of the otolaryngologists practicing in Connecticut opposes SB 202 for two reasons. First, we are concerned about the unintended consequences of SB 202, which uses age as a determining factor for benefit rather than it being one of medical necessity. The language in SB 20, although well intended, sets a new precedent for coverage based on progressive aging and not on medical necessity. We believe any bill should not discriminate or favor any individual, including minors, based on chronological years and that any individual who has been evaluated by an otolaryngologist and an audiologist, and has been determined to have a medically necessary need for hearing amplification, should qualify for a hearing aid benefit. Although we support the concept of insurance coverage for medically necessary hearing aids, we do not believe that hearing aid devices should be classified as durable medical goods and is not classified as such by Medicare. Consideration should be giving to the fact that hearing aids are NOT listed as durable medical goods under Medicare and that this Medicare eligible age group represents the majority of hearing aid users as well as non-users who would benefit from this wonderful technology. Does it make sense to give a specific age segment of the population, other than children this unique benefit? We believe not, in fact, we the only exception the general assembly should consider mandating full coverage of hearing aids is for children, under the age of eighteen, who would greatly benefit from mandatory full coverage of these devices.

In closing, we support allocation of healthcare dollars into benefits that reimburse patients who demonstrate medical necessity, for some, part or most of the cost of the device, but because of the individual and unique nature and cost of these devices they cannot be limited to specific dollar benefit limits. Providers should maintain the ability to provide the appropriate custom-molded aids specific to an individual member's needs and not be restricted or forced to sell a device that does not meet the need of his/her patient because of cost restrictions and limitations.

If there are any questions, you can email Steven Levine, M.D. President of the CT ENT Society at
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